

CLAIMS

1. A method for modifying gum arabic comprising a step of making unheated gum arabic into an aqueous solution, and a  
5 step of maintaining the thus-obtained aqueous solution at below 60°C.

2. The method for modifying gum arabic according to claim 1, wherein the concentration of the aqueous gum arabic  
10 solution is not higher than 50 mass %.

3. The method for modifying gum arabic according to claim 1, wherein the concentration of the aqueous gum arabic solution is 10 to 30 mass %  
15

4. The method for modifying gum arabic according to claim 1, wherein the temperature at which the aqueous gum arabic solution is maintained is 5 to 40°C.

20 5. The method for modifying gum arabic according to claim 1, wherein the time for which the aqueous solution is maintained at below 60°C is at least 6 hours.

25 6. The method for modifying gum arabic according to claim 1, wherein the pH of the aqueous solution is 4.5 to 6 and the time for which the aqueous solution is maintained at below 60°C is at least 3 hours.

30 7. The method for modifying gum arabic according to claim 1 which comprises a step of making unheated gum arabic into an aqueous solution under temperature conditions of below 60°C.

35 8. The method for modifying gum arabic according to claim 7, wherein the temperature conditions are within the range of from 10 to 50°C.

9. The method for modifying gum arabic according to claim 1 which is a method for enhancing the emulsification ability of gum arabic.

5

10. A modified gum arabic obtained by a method of any one of claims 1 to 9.

11. The modified gum arabic according to claim 10, wherein the unheated gum arabic belongs to the *Acacia senegal* species, and the modified gum arabic obtained by the method set forth in claim 1 has a mass-average molecular weight of not less than 1.5 million.

12. An emulsifier containing the modified gum arabic obtained by the method of any one of claims 1 to 9 as an active ingredient.

13. A method for preparing an emulsion comprising the step of dispersing a hydrophobic material in a hydrophilic solvent or dispersing a hydrophilic material in a hydrophobic solvent, using the modified gum arabic obtained by the method of any one of claims 1 to 9 as an emulsifier.

14. The method for preparing an emulsion according to Claim 13, wherein the emulsion is an O/W or W/O/W emulsion which contains, as a dispersoid, at least one hydrophobic substance selected from the group consisting of essential oils, oil-soluble flavors, oil-soluble colors, oil-soluble vitamins, polyunsaturated fatty acids, animal oils, vegetable oils, sucrose acetate isobutyrate, and medium-chain triglycerides.

15. An emulsion prepared by the method according to Claim 13.

35

16. The emulsion according to Claim 15 which is an O/W or W/O/W emulsion which contains, as a dispersoid, at least one hydrophobic substance selected from the group consisting of essential oils, oil-soluble flavors, oil-soluble colors, oil-soluble vitamins, polyunsaturated fatty acids, animal oils, vegetable oils, sucrose acetate isobutyrate, and medium-chain triglycerides.